
The Thirteen Tribes of Long Island: The History of a Myth

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If you ask most any Long Islander about the native peoples of the area you will likely hear that there were thirteen tribes joined in a loose confederacy led by Wyandanch, a Montauk chief who befriended Lion Gardiner, the first English settler on eastern Long Island. Your informant might even produce a map from a local newspaper, such as the one that appeared in the “Big Apple Almanac” series in the Long Island *Newsday* (November 10, 1991), an elementary-school text showing the island neatly divided into thirteen tribal units, beginning with the Canarsie who lived in present-day Brooklyn and ending with the Montauk on the far eastern end of the island (Sesso and White, 1991:21), or a seventh-grade text with the same map and recitation of “tribal” names (Mannello, 1984:15) (Map1). Many of the maps will even have each tribal name translated into English. Your informant might also add, with a note of pathos, that all of these tribes became extinct, leaving behind only a few “remnants” who have lost their “Indianness” through miscegenation with African-Americans.

Yet any contemporary scholar will point out that there were probably no native peoples living in tribal systems on Long Island until after the Europeans arrived (Smith, 1950:103; Salwin, 1978:168; Brassler, 1978:85; Hawk, 1984:12–16). The three tribal systems that developed later did so in response to the pressures from the expanding European communities. The “myth of extinction,” another misconception, reflects an archaic set of racial concepts that have also been discredited by contemporary social scientists (Hawk, 1984:6–7, 186–93; Strong, 1983:7–8; Snipp, 1991:28–40). Where, then, did the popular

notion of the thirteen tribes and their extinction come from? In order to trace the history of this myth we must begin with a discussion of the conceptual problems posed by the two terms “tribe” and “race.” These complex categories continue to be debated by scholars as they seek to refine their analytical models for the classification of human beings and social systems.



Map 1. This is a composite of several maps that have been widely reprinted in textbooks, Chamber of Commerce brochures, and on restaurant placemats. Map by David Bunn Martine (1992).

What Is a Tribe?

Although the term “tribe” has been replaced by such ambiguous references as “groups,” “families,” and “communities” in local histories beginning with Benjamin Thompson’s classic three-volume *History of Long Island* (1918, I:123), the press and popular literature continue to perpetuate the myth of the thirteen tribes of Long Island. Robert Coles wrote in the introduction to his 1954 booklet, *The Long Island Indian*, that his goal was to “. . . correct some of the popular misconceptions that are so widespread concerning the Long Island Indians” (p. 8). On the previous page he had informed his readers that “The Long Island Indians have practically disappeared. . . .” He then proceeded to tell his readers that the groups were not tribes, they were “chieftaincies,” which governed a number of small communities, and that there were probably more than thirteen (Coles, 1954:27). In spite of this qualification, the statement was followed by the traditional list of thirteen names. Part of the problem is that local historians have been unwilling to master the relevant anthropological data necessary to present a more accurate description of Long Island’s original inhabitants. They provide the reader with little more than a brief disclaimer about the term “tribe” and then proceed to discuss the thirteen “groups” of Long Island. There is apparently

something infectious about the number thirteen that makes it difficult for authors and readers to abandon. Perhaps it calls to mind the thirteen colonies, evoking a romantic nostalgia for the past. Even when local historian Paul Bailey correctly noted that the “generally accepted term of tribe in dealing with local Indians is a misnomer,” and that “they might better be called communities,” he entitled his booklet *The Thirteen Tribes of Long Island* (1959:6). This booklet was reprinted in 1982 with no significant changes.

John Morice, who wrote an article on “The Indians of Long Island” for Bailey’s two-volume history of Long Island (1949:107), noted that, although inappropriate, the term “tribe” was too convenient to be abandoned. William Wallace Tooker, Long Island’s pioneer ethnographer, whose encyclopedic *Indian Place Names on Long Island* (1911) remains the primary source for English translations of local Algonquian names, made it clear that a “place name” should not be confused with a “tribal” name. Tooker quoted Roger Williams’ observations of the Rhode Island Indians’ social structure. “They had no name to difference themselves from strangers, except the names they took from the place of residence,” said Williams. Although Tooker concluded that this description was also true for the Long Island Indians, his place name translations are generally cited on the “tribal” maps, misleading the reader to conclude that a particular tribal group occupied each shaded or colored area (Tooker; EHTR, IV:i).

Most Long Island children learn about the thirteen “tribes” from their fourth- and seventh-grade teachers, who follow the state curriculum guidelines requiring that they teach students about local Native Americans. The best-intentioned teachers are often forced by time constraints and a crowded curriculum to rely on the most accessible sources. The Sesso and White fourth-grade text, *The Long Island Story*, published in 1991, repeats Bailey’s approach. The authors use the term “family” rather than “tribe,” but they reproduce the conventional map showing Long Island divided into thirteen family groups (see Map 1). George Mannello’s seventh-grade text, *Our Long Island*, subtitles his chapter on the Long Island Indians “The Thirteen Tribes,” yet in the 1984 “corrected edition” he inserts a fourteenth “tribe,” the Unkechaug. In spite of this, one of the student exercises at the end of the chapter is to draw a map of the thirteen tribes and to locate the areas where they lived. What is more important is that neither of these widely used texts attempts to confront the complexity of Native American extended family and kinship systems. The readers are left with no meaningful alternative to a term they have been told is inappropriate.

The reluctance of these local authors to discuss the subject in more depth is understandable. Professional anthropologists themselves are divided on the usefulness of the label. Human social systems have been classified by anthropologists into categories based on levels of social complexity. The simplest groups,

called “bands,” are nomadic, egalitarian, hunting and gathering societies. Leadership is based on personal influence rather than inheritance and is generally shared by several adults. The “tribe” is a more complex, sedentary, social system, generally based on some rudimentary horticulture, and is governed by a hereditary leader, who has very limited power.

Tribes are much larger than bands and are unified by age and gender associations that cross lineage and clan affiliations. One crucial difference between a band and a tribe is that tribal societies are ideological groups that have a distinctive name that is usually invested with deeply felt emotional symbolism, while bands have an informal collective identity rooted in clan or kinship relations (Sturtevant, 1983:6). The next level of complexity is the “chiefdom,” a much more populous society with an economic system that produces a significant surplus of goods. The highest level of complexity is the “state,” with a market economy and a hierarchy of specific social roles.

The problem here is that human societies seldom fit neatly into these classifications, nor do they progress through evolution from the simplest to the most complex. Although there are some scholars who feel that these ideal types are so imprecise that they hesitate to use them at all, others find them useful as general reference points. William Sturtevant (1983:3), while agreeing that “. . . these ideal types have a rather ambiguous relation to the real world,” argues that they are still useful “. . . as guides for investigation and understanding of the real world.” The term “tribe” is particularly troublesome, however, even to some of the scholars who agree with Sturtevant about the general usefulness of ideal types. There is general agreement about such conceptual models as band and chiefdom, but there is no such consensus about “tribe.” Some scholars ignore the term, arguing that a more accurate model of group organizational complexity posits the band as the simplest social system and the chiefdom as the next level (Harris, 1980: ch. 16, 17; Barnouw, 1982: ch. 12). In this model, “chiefdoms” are defined as amalgamations of bands that have fused.

Those scholars who include “tribe” in their analytical models are very cautious and define the category very broadly. Aceves and King (1979:301–3) define a tribe as “. . . not much more than an extension of a band” and Michael Howard (1989:315) describes a tribe as a “loose alliance” of small, “stateless societies” that occasionally join together. Morton Fried (1975) has argued persuasively that in many cases bands came together to resist conquest by Europeans or were coerced into an administrative structure to facilitate colonial control over them. Tribal systems emerged within Native American societies, concludes Fried, as a response to pressures from expanding European settlements. Lynn Ceci (1990), in her analysis of coastal Long Island and Southern New England Native American societies, argues that horticulture and sedentary settlement patterns, two crucial

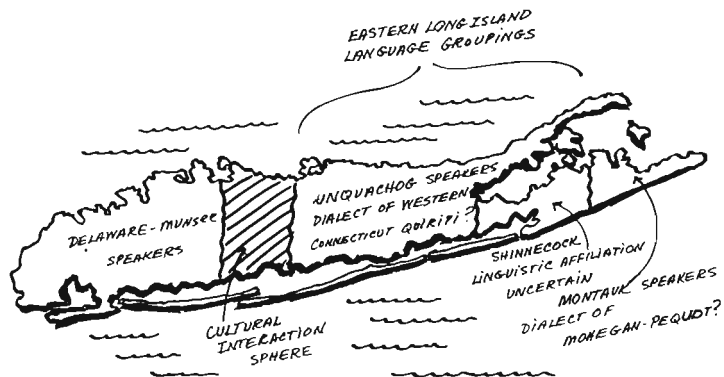
criteria for tribal-level systems, did not emerge on Long Island until after the arrival of the European settlers (1990). Although some scholars have challenged Ceci's conclusions, most acknowledge that the shrinking of hunting and gathering territory, as more and more land was taken over by whites, forced the small Native American communities to become more sedentary and to increase their dependence on horticulture.

Another model, more appropriate for Long Island, was used by Robert Grumet in his study of the Delaware (1979:23–28). Grumet suggests a more fluid, atomistic model of fissioning and fusing social structures wherein villages come together temporarily in a loose confederation for a specific purpose and then return to a village-centered system again. These fusions would not always include the same village or clan groupings each time. An ethnographic map would show continually moving concentrations of dots rather than the conventional tribal boundaries (Grumet, personal communication, 1992; Aceves and King, 1979:246). This pattern was widespread in North America. Plains Indians, such as the Cheyenne, fission off into small extended family groups in the winter when food is scarce and then fuse together again in the summer for the buffalo hunt (Hoebel, 1960).

The Evolution of Tribal Systems on Long Island

Native American groups on Long Island illustrate some of the difficulties inherent in these rubrics. The firsthand accounts by the seventeenth-century Dutch and English observers and the small number of archaeological excavations suggest that the indigenous groups here were organized into village systems with varying levels of social complexity. They lived in small communities that were connected in an intricate web of kinship relations (Salwin, 1978; Brasser, 1971, 1978). The communities appear to have been divided into two general culture areas that overlapped in the area known today as the Hempstead plains (Map 2). The western groups spoke the Delaware-Munsee dialect of Algonquian and shared cultural characteristics such as the longhouse system of social organization with their brethren in what is now New Jersey and Delaware (Kraft, 1986; Grumet, 1989).

The linguistic affiliation of the eastern groups is less well understood. Ives Goddard, who has studied this problem, concluded that the languages here are related to the southern New England Algonquian dialects, but he could only speculate on the nature of these relationships (Goddard, 1978:72). Working with a few brief vocabulary lists of Montauk and Unquachog, he suggested that the Montauk might be related to Mohegan-Pequot and the Unquachog might possibly be grouped with the Quiripi of western Connecticut. The information on the Shinnecock was too sparse for any determination.



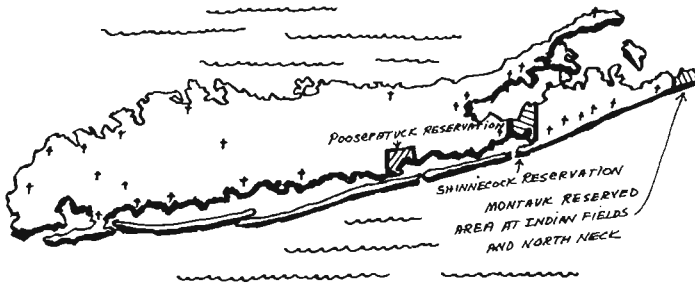
Map 2. Native Americans of Long Island, 1600. Proto-Algonquian Language Groupings as defined by Ives Goddard (1978:70-77). Map by David Bunn Martine (1992).

No permanent social structure existed beyond these linguistic and kinship systems. On occasion several villages might form temporary alliances to accomplish a limited goal, such as a military alliance against a common enemy or a large hunting expedition, but once the goal was reached, or hopelessly frustrated, the alliance quickly dissolved. Fears of “Indian conspiracies” frequently resulted in widespread hysteria during the latter half of the seventeenth century, but few of these military alliances ever posed a threat to the colonists. Shared religious ceremonies, which drew groups from some distance to a host village, were often viewed with great fear by some whites who suspected that a “confederacy” was being formed. The most common pattern of indigenous life on Long Island prior to the intervention of the whites was the autonomous village linked by kinship to its neighbors.

The Montauk, under the leadership of Wyandanch in the mid-seventeenth century, and the Matinnecock, under the sachems Suscaneman and Tackapousha, do appear to have developed rather tenuous coalitions as a result of their contact with the English settlers. Lion Gardiner promoted Wyandanch, enabling him to assert control over his people and influence Native American affairs in other parts of the island. Although the Montauk and Matinnecock later lost their land base and are now scattered across Long Island in small enclaves, they have managed to retain their identity and have revived a loose system of tribal communication. William Hawk, a descendent of an indigenous community that once lived along the Nissequoge River, studied the revival of the Matinnecock people in his doctoral dissertation (1984). Matinnecock (Matinecoc) longhouse communities in

Flushing, Manhasset, and Amityville are the contemporary centers for the tribal revival (Sharon Jackson, personal communication, 1992). Asiba Tupahache, a Matinnecock spokesperson, is a strong advocate of the cultural revival. She publishes a newsletter, *The Spirit of January*, which informs her readers about Matinnecock activities and broader issues of race and gender discrimination. Robert Cooper, a Montauk descendent who was elected to the East Hampton town board in 1992; Howard Treadwell of both Montauk and Poosapatuck ancestry; the Reverend Sharon Jackson, a leader of the Montauk enclaves in central Long Island from Bayshore to Sayville; and the Pharaoh family, Olive, Carolyn, Peggy, and Olive's son Robert, from the Eastville clan in Sag Harbor, are currently involved in reviving the Montauk tribal structure. The Shinnecock and the Poosapatuck, who were fortunate enough to retain a land base, also developed tribal systems in order to deal with the demands made by external forces.

The other indigenous communities on Long Island, however, were dispersed by the pressures of European settlements and never adopted more complex political structures. Many of the remnants who had lived in the villages of Rockaway, Canarsie, Keschaechquereren, Techkonis, Nayack, Marechkawieck, Maspeth, Seacatogue, Merrick, Wichquawanck, and Nissequogue moved east to join the Poosapatuck or settled quietly in nearby English settlements. Azariah Horton, the missionary who preached to the Indians of Long Island in the mid-eighteenth century, traveled from Rockaway to Montauk visiting small enclaves of surviving groups (Horton, 1744) (Map 3).



Map 3. Tribal Reservations and Community Enclaves (+) Visited by Azariah Horton (1744). Map by David Bunn Martine (1992).

Where, then, did the list of thirteen “tribes” come from? How did the prevailing “conventional wisdom” about the “thirteen tribes” of Long Island become entrenched in the historical literature? Most of the “tribal” names with which we are now familiar do not appear to have been recognized by either the first

European observers or by the original inhabitants until the process of land purchases began after the first settlements were established. We simply do not know what these people called themselves, but all the ethnographic data on North American Indian cultures suggest that they identified themselves in terms of lineage and clan membership. These village communities did not have clearly defined, hierarchical political structures with rulers who could command absolute obedience from their followers. The borders of their hunting territories were very loosely drawn and must have overlapped those of their neighbors on all sides. The English and Dutch were frustrated by this lack of structure because it made land purchase so difficult. Deeds, according to the European concept of property, had to be signed by identifiable owners with authority to sell and have specific boundaries on a map.

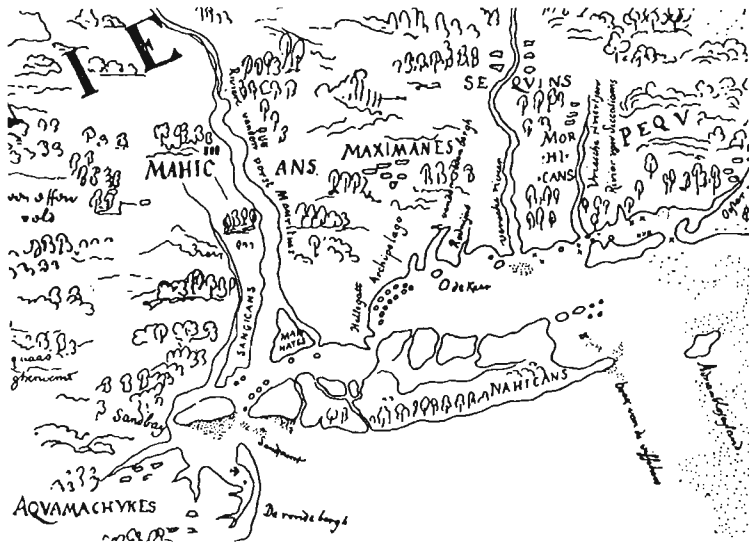
The relatively amorphous leadership structure of the Long Island communities, the imprecise delineation of hunting ground boundaries, and their view of the land as a living entity to be used rather than owned made conventional European real estate deals nearly impossible to negotiate. The surviving primaty records suggest that the Dutch and English remedied this situation by pressing cooperative local sachems to establish a more structured political base in their communities and to define their communities as “tribes” with specific boundaries. An early example of this intervention into Native American political institutions is a 1664 agreement wherein the East Hampton and Southampton officials appointed a sunk squaw named Quashawam to govern both the Shinnecock and the Montauk (SHTR, II:36–37; Karabag and Strong, 1991:189–204). In Algonquian communities it was not uncommon to find females in positions of authority. Often they were widows or daughters of sachems who had no male heirs. Although Quashawam was indeed the daughter of the deceased sachem Wyandanch, her power rested on English support. Quashawam’s young son, Awansamawge, was sent to live with the Shinnecock where he would assume the duties of sachem when he came of age. The document spelled out very specific terms of appointment and even listed a line of succession following the death of Quashawam. The system apparently did not work out because Awansamawge is not mentioned again and Quashawam herself disappears from the records after 1669.

By 1670 intervention had become routine. Governor Lovelace endorsed the election of a Shinnecock, named Quaquashawagh, to be their sachem and appointed another, named Cawbutt, to serve as “constable” with the responsibility to maintain “. . . good order among the Shinnecock” (NYCD, XIV:647). In the same executive action, the governor issued commissions of appointment for a sachem and a constable at Montauk to the East Hampton Town officials. Apparently the governor did not even know who the appointees would be because he left a blank for the town officials to fill in the name. The governor noted in his

order that “. . . it hath been usual and is found very convenient that some person amongst ye Indians should in their respective Tribes or Nations be as Chief or Sachem over ye rest as well to keep them in ye better order as to be responsible for any mischief they should happen to commit. . . .” The governor felt that Quaquashawag was an excellent candidate “. . . by reason of his quiet and peaceable disposition. . . .”

There was no question about who was really in charge. Three years later Cawbutt was stripped of his office and accused of leading a riotous group of Shinnecock through Southampton, breaking windows and committing unnamed “mischievous” acts. The Shinnecock were threatened with arrest and deportation “in chains” to trial in New York. Quaquashawag was apparently not involved with the matter. The local English constable was ordered to impose good order on the Shinnecock villages (SHTR, II:202). The troubles continued at Southampton. In 1680 the local town officials complained to the governor about the Shinnecock political system. “They are a people yet have no government . . . ,” lamented John Howell, who spoke as a representative of the town in a petition asking that the governor take action to prevent the Shinnecock from planting on ground that had formerly been purchased by the English (NYCD, XIV:756). The Shinnecock certainly did have an orderly system of village governance, but it did not conform to English norms. The colonists wanted a political structure that would enable them to exercise more direct control over Shinnecock behavior. The continual efforts of the English to impose such a structure conforms closely to the model defined by anthropologist Milton Fried in his analysis of “tribal” systems (Fried, 1975).

The earliest reports written by the Dutch and English observers seldom mention any “tribal” names for the native peoples of Long Island. Robert Juet, an officer on Henry Hudson’s *Half Moon* in 1610, referred in his diary to “the people of the country” and to one sachem as “the old savage,” but he made no group distinctions at all (Jameson, 1909:18, 20, 22). The first reference to what may have been a “tribal” name for a group on Long Island was made by the Dutch explorer Adrien Block. In 1616 he identified the people living on the eastern end of Long Island as “Nahican” (Map 4). Unfortunately we know nothing about Block’s source of information.



Map 4. The Adrien Block Map, 1616. (Facsimile reprint in Levine and Bonvillian, eds., 1980:160.)

William Wallace Tooker translated Nahican as “the people of the point.” Tooker believed that the map label might have been an error by Block, who confused Nahican with the “Anglicized” name of the Narragansett who lived across the sound in Rhode Island (Tooker, 1911:150). This speculation seems a bit strained. If Tooker’s translation is correct, it would seem to be quite appropriate for people living near Montauk point. If Nahican does actually refer to a Southern New England group, it is much closer to “Mahican” than to Narragansett. A different name for the people of western Long Island was reported by Johannes de Laet, a director of the Dutch West India Company, who compiled a geography entitled *New World* in 1625. De Laet referred to “. . . a nation of savages . . . who are called Matouwax . . .” who lived on Long Island (Jameson, 1909:44). De Laet’s book may have influenced the Dutch mapmaker Willem Blaeu, who produced a map of Southern New England and Long Island in 1635. Blaeu moved the label “Nahican” to the Narragansett lands in Rhode Island and placed “Matouwacs” on Long Island (Map 5). Tooker believed that Matouwacs was a variation of the Massachusetts Algonquian word “Meht-anaw-ack,” meaning “land of the periwinkle” or “country of the ear shell,” and listed the following variants he found in the historical documents: Matoouacks, Meilowacks, Metoac, Meitowacks, Matowcas, Mattanwake, and Matowa (Tooker, 1911:124–25). Tooker’s comparison with the Massachusetts’ dialect is rather arbitrary because De Laet is

more likely to have heard the word from the Munsee speakers who lived around New Netherland.



Map 5. Willem Janzoon Blaeu, *Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova*, 1635. (Allen, 1991:47–48.)

The origin of “Matouwacs” is obscure, but we do know that the Native Americans living on western Long Island told the Dutch in 1636 that Long Island was “. . . by them called ‘Sewanhacky’. . .” (NYCD, XIV:2–3; Tooker, 1911:232–34). Tooker once again demonstrated his resourcefulness in coming up with imaginative solutions to a difficult linguistic problem. “Sewan,” he said, was closely related to the Narragansett word “Seawhoog,” which had been translated by Roger Williams to mean “they are scattered.” The last half of the word, continued Tooker, comes from the Delaware-Munsee word “hacky,” meaning “land” or “country.” Putting together two words from entirely different dialects and assuming that what was scattered must have been shells even though “anaw,” the word he had said meant shell, was not present, Tooker concluded that Sewanhacky meant “land of shells.” The only consistency in these translations is Tooker’s assertion that both terms were references to shells. Tooker’s interpretation is



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plausible, but if he is correct it is a conclusion based on speculation, not linguistic analysis (Bassett, 1967:9).

Although the sachems repeatedly referred to Long Island as “Sewanhacky,” the mapmakers apparently paid attention only to the “mother maps,” which continued to be used as references for new maps (Allen, 1991:47). The name “Matouack” appears on three subsequent Dutch maps in 1635, 1656, and 1662, and on two English maps as late as 1755 and 1779 (Levine and Bonvillain, 1980:165–67; Allen, 1991:47–60). “Matouack” was placed on the 1656 Jansson-Visscher map twice, first in large print as the name for Long Island, and then in lowercase on the far eastern end of the island in what appears to be a “tribal” designation for the Montauk (Allen, 1991:50) (Map 6). In the 1664 patent from Charles II to his brother, the Duke of York, “Meitowax” is again given as the “Indian” name for Long Island (Tooker, 1911:124–25). On the English maps “Matouaks” (Matouacks) appears as a tribal name for the people living along the south shore from Hempstead to Southampton. The 1779 map indicates that this was the location of the “ancient settlements of the Matouacks Indians.” Curiously, neither of the English maps locate the “Matouacks” on the eastern tip of Long Island, where the Montauk lived.



Map 6. Nicholas Jansson Visscher, Nova Belgii, 1656. (Allen, 1991:50.)

Certainly the Dutch were well aware that the Native Americans were divided into many separate groups. Johannes de Laet noted that “. . . the barbarians, being divided into many nations and peoples, differ much from one another in language though not in custom” (Jameson, 1909:57). De Laet identified the “Sankikans” who lived in what is now northern New Jersey, the “Siwanois” on the mainland north of Hellgate, the Manatthans, “. . . a bad race of savages,” and the mysterious

“Matouwacs” of Long Island, but he did not mention any other names for the Native American communities on Long Island.

The term “tribe” was first used by Nicholas Van Wassener, a Dutch scholar and physician, who used it interchangeably with “nation” in a 1626 report (Jameson, 1909:67–68). Van Wassener did not report the names of any Long Island Indians, but he did locate the “Manhates” and the “Esopes” near the mouth of the Hudson. With the exception of the confusing references to “Nahican” and “Matouwacks,” the first mention of a Long Island Native American group by name, curiously, is the Shinnecock. None of the western Long Island groups who were close neighbors of the Dutch are named prior to 1639. In 1628 Isaack de Rasieres, a Dutch merchant, wrote a brief account of his visit to New Netherland in which he describes two groups “. . . who support themselves by planting maize and making sewan [wampum], and who are called Souwenos and Sinnecox.” They were both, continued Rasieres, subject to the “Pyquans.” The editors, J. Franklin Jameson and A. F. J. Van Lear, who translated the document, concluded that the references were to the Siwanoy, a group living on the northern shore of Long Island Sound, the Shinnecock on the south fork of eastern Long Island, and the Pequots of southern Connecticut (Jameson, 1909:103). It is important to note that Rasieres does not even mention the Montauk, who are often characterized by modern historians as the dominant eastern tribe in the seventeenth century. The reference to wampum making and subjugation to the Pequot, however, is a commonly repeated theme.

The first mention of a western Long Island village by name is in a 1637 deed between the Dutch and Numers and Seyseys, who are identified as “chiefs of Marechkawieck.” These men sold Tenkenas (Wards Island) and Minnahanonck (Blackwell’s Island) near Hell’s Gate between Manhattan and Queens to the Dutch (NYCD, XIV:5). The village of Marechkawieck was located about six miles to the south, where Brooklyn Borough Hall is today (Grumet, 1981:27; MacLeod, 1941). Two years later an artistic pen-and-ink watercolor wash map believed to have been drawn by Dutch cartographer Johannes Vingboons located “Mareckewich” (Marechkawieck) and three other Native American villages, “Techkonis,” “Keskachane” (Keskaechquerem, Keshaechquereren), and “Wichquawanck” in present-day Brooklyn (Map 7). Each village site is marked by a longhouse, which represented either a single public house or a general architectural style (Map 8). The longhouse structure is generally associated with the Munsee-speaking Delaware communities in New Jersey and western Long Island (Kraft, 1986:122–27). A map of all the Long Island Native American communities in 1639 would look like the Vingboons map of Brooklyn and would bear little resemblance to the conventional “tribal” map with the thirteen neat territorial boundaries that appears today on everything from school texts to restaurant placemats.



Map 7. Manatus Map (1639). Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Copy in State University of New York at Stony Brook Library, Special Collections.



Map 8. Native American villages in what is now Brooklyn, Long Island, from the Manatus Map (1639).

The references in the deed and on the map appear to be place, names rather than the names of groups. Tooker translated Marechkawieck to mean “the fortified place,” a reference, perhaps, to a palisaded village or a chief’s residence (Tooker, 1911:102–3; Grumet, 1981:26–27). The wording in the deed is ambiguous in this regard and we have no idea how the people who lived in the village would have identified themselves. It is clear that the Dutch administrators were primarily concerned about who had the authority to sell a particular area of land and that those Dutch who did take an interest and recorded native customs never discussed the question of tribal names.

This deed with the “chiefs” from Marechkawieck is one of four negotiated between June 16, 1636, and July 16, 1637, that mark the beginning of a shift in Dutch policy from an emphasis on the fur trade to the development of an expanded settlement based on agriculture (NYCD, XIV:3–5; Trelease, 1960:60–62). The Dutch negotiated the other deeds with two sachems named Penhawis (Pemawys, Pewiehaas) and Kakapetteyno (Cacapeteyo, Kakaspetteño) for Nut Island (Governor’s Island) and land in south Brooklyn, but neither of them was identified by a “tribal” reference. The men were said to be the owners of the land who had the “. . . consent of the community at Keskaechquerem.”

The following year Kakapetteyno, Menqueuw, and Suwirau, who sold land in what is now Bushwick in Brooklyn, were referred to as the “chiefs of Keskaechquerem” (NYCD, XIV:14). Some of the nineteenth-century historians argued that “Keskaechquerem” was another name for “Canarsie,” but there is no evidence in the records to support this (Brodhead, I:297, 388; O’Callaghan, 1845, I:215, 275, 296; Van Wyck, 1924:419–30; Grumet, 1981:6). The name “Canarsie” does not appear in the colonial documents until 1647, when mention is made of some meadowland near Jamaica Bay (NYCD, XIV:61). Much later, in 1665, a sachem named Wametappack is identified as “sachem of Canryssen” and the “owner of Canaryssen.”

The Dutch continued to purchase land as they pushed their boundaries eastward. On January 15, 1639, Mechowodt (Mechoswodt), “chief sachem of Marossepinck” (Massapeague), ceded an area of land running from “Rechouwhacky” (Rockaway) on the south shore to “Sicktauwhacky” and back northwest across the island to Martin Garretson’s Bay (NYCD, XIV:15). Although the boundaries are difficult to trace, the land appears to include an area extending east from Rockaway to present-day Massapequa and north to Little Neck Bay (David Allen, personal communication, February 1992). “Sicktauwhacky” (Siketenwhacky, Siketenhacky, Sickentanhacky) was anglicized to “Sea-qua-ta-eg” (“Secatogue”) and later became a “tribal” reference (Jaray, 1968:54; Tooker, 1911:243). The agreement placed the area under Dutch protection and gave them future purchase rights to the land.

In September of that year the English made their first move to gain a foothold on Long Island and challenge the Dutch. Lion Gardiner, a military engineer hired by John Winthrop, Jr. to construct and command a fort at Saybrook in Connecticut, purchased an island in Peconic Bay called “Manchonat” from a sachem of “Pommanocc” named Yovawan (Gardiner, 1947:60). Manchonat was a deserted island at the time because a plague had apparently wiped out the population (Tooker, 1911:90–91). Gardiner renamed the island for himself and built his home there. William Tooker at first believed that Pommanocc, which has been spelled fourteen different ways in the colonial records, meant “land where there is travel by water,” quite appropriate for the islands between the two eastern forks of Long Island. Yovawan’s village was on present-day Shelter Island, nestled in Peconic Bay about seven miles east of Gardiner’s Island. Tooker based his translation on the similarity of Pommanocc to “pomma’-hum,” a Delaware word meaning “to travel by water.” Tooker later changed his mind, saying only that further “. . . investigation compelled me to reject it . . .” (Tooker, 1911:183). He now believed that “Pommonocc” was closer to the Narragansett words “pauman” or “pummen’um,” meaning “he offers,” and “up-paupau-men-uk,” meaning “he habitually offers it,” hence “land of tribute,” a reference to the whole of Long Island. One can easily see here the arbitrary nature of Tooker’s translations and the meager data base he worked with. According to the research by modern scholars, the best reference for the language of the eastern Long Island bands is Mohegan-Pequot or Quiripi rather than Delaware, Massachusetts, or Narragansett dialects of Algonquian (Goddard, 1978).

As the Dutch settlements expanded under the new policy begun with the land purchases in 1637, tensions mounted between colonists and neighboring Native American communities. A series of raids and counterattacks known as Governor Kieft’s War began with a Dutch attack on a Raritan Indian village on Staten Island in the summer of 1640 (Jameson, 1909:208; Trelease, 1960:64). Sporadic fighting continued for the next five years, claiming the lives of more than a thousand Native Americans. The village of Marechkawieck apparently did not survive the war. The people were dispersed, probably to neighboring Munsee-speaking groups in New Jersey or to neighboring villages around Jamaica Bay. There is no record of the name after 1647 (Mac Leod, 1941; Grumet, 1981:26–29). The most brutal attacks of the war occurred in February 1643, when Dutch soldiers massacred the Native Americans living at Pavonia and Corlaer’s Hook (Trelease, 1960: 72–73; Jameson, 1909:227–29).

The next deed to land on eastern Long Island was negotiated between a group of English who established Southampton in 1640 and twelve men led by Sachem Mandush. The native peoples listed in the deed had no tribal designation; they are simply referred to as “. . . the true owners of the eastern part of Long Island” (Strong, 1983:67). The second land agreement, signed by Mandush in 1649,

concerned planting rights near a small settlement on Sebonac Creek a mile away from the Shinnecock village. The agreement identifies people on Sebonac Creek as “Seponark Indians,” not Shinnecock. Curiously, the name “Shinnecock,” mentioned in the Dutch records by De Rasieres in 1626, is not used in the Southampton town records until 1657 when an attempt was made to determine the boundaries of the land purchased in 1640 (SHTR, I:114). There are sixteen references to “Indians” between 1640 and 1657 but no mention of a “tribal” name (SHTR, I:13–17). Apparently it was not until 1657 that all of the native people in the villages around Southampton were identified by the local whites as a “tribe” known as the “Shinnecock.”

The place name “Rockaway” (Rechqua Akie), first mentioned in the 1639 deed, is described in more detail by David de Vries, a merchant-adventurer who had arrived in New Netherland in 1633. In March of 1643 de Vries was attempting to reach a peace settlement in the midst of the brutal fighting that had intensified after the massacres at Pavonia and Corlaer’s Hook. De Vries met with fifteen sachems who probably came from the Munsee-speaking villages west of the Hempstead plains. One of the more prominent sachems, who had one eye, appeared to speak for the rest. De Vries, his peace mission successful, never referred to the sachems as members of “tribes” (NYCD, II:1, 117; Jameson, 1909:230–31). The peace was short-lived as fighting again commenced in what is now Westchester County. Kieft recruited Captain John Underhill, one of the officers who led the English troops in the massacre of the Pequot at Mystic in Connecticut, to aid the Dutch troops. The English settlement of Maspeth (Newtown) on the western edge of Long Island was destroyed by Indians in September.

In spite of the warfare, a group of Englishmen from New England opened negotiations with several sachems for a settlement at Hempstead. On November 13, 1643, the sachem of “Masepeage” (Massapeague), who is not named in the deed, and six others, Aarane, Pamaman, Remoj, Waines, Whanage, and Yarafus, who are identified as “. . . wee of Rockaway, Merriack, and Massapequa,” sold land near present-day Hempstead to Englishmen Robert Fordham and John Carman (NYCD, XIV:530). Some of this land appears to have been located inside the boundaries of the 1639 Dutch purchase from Mechowodt, yet the Dutch made no protest. It seems likely that the earlier deed was viewed as simply marking a very general boundary that the Dutch might want to claim in the future. Governor Kieft did not object to the establishment of a new settlement as long as they acknowledged Dutch control and paid their taxes to New Netherland. The Carman deed is the first mention of Merriack (variants include Merrick, Merioke, Moroke, Mericoock), but once again this is clearly not a “tribal” designation. The English and Dutch were so anxious to fix names and geographic locations to facilitate land purchases that they arbitrarily defined these boundaries.

During the winter of 1643–44, the combined English and Dutch troops attacked several Native American villages on Long Island and across the sound near Pound Ridge in what is now Westchester County. On April 15, 1644, Gauwaroe, sachem of “Matinnekonck,” appealed to the Dutch for peace (NYCD, XIV:56). The sachem spoke for his neighbors at “Marospinc” (Massapeague) and “Siketeuhacky” (Secatogue) (Tooker, 1911:111, 243; Grumet, 1981:30). This is the first mention of the Matinnecock. Although we do not know about the changing perceptions within these Native American communities, it is clear that the Dutch were beginning to impose “tribal” labels on them. Other villages did not support Gauwaroe’s peace proposal and continued to fight (Grumet, 1981:6). The Dutch complained that the “Reckouhacky” (Rockaway), the “Bay,” and the “Marechkawieck” remained hostile (NYCD, XIV:56). The “Bay” may have been a reference to a group that was later identified as being from “Canarosse” in 1660 (Grumet, 1981:6). The fact that they lived around Jamaica Bay in close contact with the Dutch for more than two decades and were never referred to by name until 1660 indicates, once again, the arbitrary nature of the “name game.”

In the fall of 1644, at the second meeting of the newly formed United Colonies in Hartford, Connecticut, relations with Native American groups filled the agenda. Four years earlier the English had established two small communities on eastern Long Island at Southampton and Southold and were growing concerned about their safety. Governor Kieft’s War raised fears all along the frontier. Four sachems from the area, led by Youghcoe (Youghco), sachem of “Munhausett,” came to Hartford and asked for a “certificate” from the English that stated the conditions of their tributary relationship (Pulsifer, 1968, IX:18–19). The sachems were concerned about their own safety from “unjust grieivances and vexacions” that might come at the hands of the English. The United Colonies issued a formal statement of agreement to the “Indians of Eastern Long Island,” who had, through their sachems Youghcoe, Wiantause, Moughmaitow, and Weenagamin, professed their friendship to the English and the Dutch and agreed not to harm “. . . either of them in their persons, cattle or goods . . . and to deliver all such to deserved punishment . . .” who conspired in secret against the English or the Dutch. It was a one-sided agreement because the English made it clear that they were under no obligation to protect the sachems’ people from an enemy attack.

The English did not name any “tribal” group as parties to the agreement, although Youghcoe is identified in the minutes of the meeting as being “of Munhausett.” This was simply a reference to Youghcoe’s home. It is possible that Youghcoe was the same Yovowam of Pommonoc who sold Gardiner his island. Tooker was convinced that they were the same person, even though they were identified with two different place-names. He translated “Munhausett” (Manhansett) to mean “Sheltered Island,” a definition in harmony with his first translation of Pommonoc as a “land where there is traveling by water.” The two

words are so close in meaning that they may have been used interchangeably by the Indians. Tooker was not impressed with this relationship and proceeded to argue that Pommanoc meant “land of tribute” and that it was a name for all of Long Island.

The absence of any tribal reference in the wording of the 1644 Hartford agreement suggests that no clear group identification was important to either the sachems or the English at the time. The English became concerned when they began to expand their settlements and wanted to fix specific “tribal” boundaries, identify “tribal” names, and designate leaders with the authority to make real estate deals. Gradually, convenient “place-name” references became accepted as “official” tribal names both by native groups and by the white settlers.

The Dutch had been similarly uninterested in affixing “tribal” labels until they began to expand their settlements as Governor Kieft’s War was drawing to a close. In the primary account of the Dutch war, for example, there is no mention of any “tribal” names of the groups fighting against the Dutch (Jameson, 1909:267–84). One of the last episodes in the Dutch war provides an example of the growing interest in establishing and recording group identities. A sachem named Witaneywen, who is identified as “sachem of ‘Mochgonnekonc,’” came to the Dutch with a war party of forty-seven men and offered to help them subdue an unnamed enemy. Witaneywen and his men took some rations and sailed away on a Dutch ship for a six-day expedition against the enemy. The sachem returned with the severed head and hands of an unfortunate “enemy” and announced that he had been empowered by his allies Rochkouw, sachem of Cotsjewaminck, Mamawichtouw, sachem of Catsjeyick, and Weyrinteynich, sachem of Mirrachtauhacky to tell the Dutch that the four sachems now controlled the villages of Ouheywichkingh, Sichteyhacky, Sicketauhacky, Nisinckquehacky, and Reckonhacky (NYCD, XIV:60). These villages, pledged Witaneywen, would remain friendly to the Dutch.

The Nisinckquehacky village, located on the Nissequogue River, is described as the place where “. . . the Matinnecock now reside. . . .” This suggests that the Dutch were now using “Matinnecock” to identify a particular group of Native Americans and not to name a place where that group lived. It is impossible, of course, to document the emergence of this perception, but it is clear that by the middle of the seventeenth century both the Dutch and the English were applying the place-names to Native American groups.

Tooker believed that these four sachems were the same men who had appealed to the English the previous fall in Hartford (Tooker, 1896, reprint, 1980:179). In the Dutch document, however, they are all associated with specific place-names. The next time these sachems appear in the English record they are identified in the same manner. Tooker argued that Anglicized versions of the Dutch references

appear on the English deed for East Hampton signed three years later by Poggatacut, the Munhansett sachem, Wayandanch, the Meantacutt sachem, Momoweta, the Corchake sachem, and Nowedonah, the Shinecok sachem (EHTR, I:2–4). This document indicates that the English were now also becoming concerned with “tribal” names, sachems, and specific locations. Three of the “tribal” names are similar, Mochgonneconc for Shinecok (Shinnecock), Mirrachtauhacky for Meantacutt (Montauk), and Catsjeyick for Corchake (Corchaug), a group living on the North Fork of Long Island, but “Cotsjewaminck” does not even come close to “Munhansett.” If Tooker is correct, the 1645 agreement is the first mention of the Corchaug, who were later to join the list of “thirteen.” Two of the sachems’ names, Wayandanch (Weyrinteynich) and Momoweta (Mamawichtouw), are similar, but the other two are quite different. Tooker argues that Native American names were frequently changed several times during a person’s lifetime in response to dramatic experiences or to symbolize the normal rites of passage from childhood to adult status. This is true, but one should not assume that it was done in a particular case without some corroboration.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, however, the Montauk, along with the Shinnecock and Matinnecock, were well on their way to developing internal structures and economic systems consistent with the conventional definition of a tribe. The Montauk, for example, were becoming more involved with horticulture. In the 1648 sale of land to the English, they asked for twenty-four hoes as a part of the payment. The irony for the Montauk is that when these tribal institutions, which grew and remained strong for two hundred years, began to decline at the end of the nineteenth century, the courts ruled that they were no longer an “Indian” community and let the developers take their land (Strong, 1992:17–20).

Although Witaneywen and the eastern sachems claimed to control all of the land west to Reckonhacky (Rockaway), this is highly unlikely. These men probably exaggerated their power in order to establish good relations with the Dutch. The eastern groups were in a vulnerable position between two aggressive European powers who had demonstrated their military prowess by massacring whole villages. Witaneywen and his allies may have wanted to make sure that the fate of the Pequot, who had been massacred by the English at Mystic in 1637, and of the Indians who had been slaughtered by the Dutch at Pavonia and Corlear’s Hook in 1643 did not befall them. The sachems were becoming aware that a more structured social system gave them some advantages in bargaining with the whites. Although, as we have seen, these institutions were used by the whites to manipulate and control certain aspects of Native American life, the tribal structures also enabled the Montauk, Shinnecock, Matinnecock, and Poosepatuck to survive as a people. Robert Grumet, in his study of the Delaware, was one of the first scholars to appreciate this theme in the history of the relations between native peoples and

the European invaders. Given the advantages of the European settlers, remarked Grumet, "It is therefore little short of remarkable that they [the Delaware] . . . retained not only their lands, but their socio-political integrity as well. . . ." (Grumet, 1984:3).

Following the Dutch war the remnants from Marechkawieck, Keshachquereren, Nayack, and Rockaway villages sold their land and appear to have consolidated in a settlement near Jamaica Bay (Grumet, 1981:6). In 1647 a deed refers to this area as home of the "Cannarse" Indians (Grumet, 1981:6; NYCD, 1:449). There is no evidence to suggest that any of the remnant communities ever developed social structures consistent with tribal status. The Canarse and the larger Massapequa villages south of Hempstead were pressured to sell their land after King Philip's War (1675–76) and remove to the east where many joined with the larger Matinnecock, Shinnecock, Montauk, and Unkechaug communities. The Unkechaug village of Poosepatuck welcomed many of the western families after William Smith set aside a permanent reservation for them on the Forge River in 1700 (BHTR, 1:75–76, 91–92).

During the thirty-year period from 1648 to 1678 large numbers of land sales were negotiated by the growing settler communities. In Oyster Bay, for example, ninety-three deeds for small parcels of land were sold during these years to the settlers by Suscaneman and Werah, who are identified as Matinnecock sachems (Grumet, unpublished manuscript). References to specific place-names were becoming quite common in the records and they were clearly intended to designate a "tribal" identity. Land in East Riding (Suffolk County) was being sold by Nasseconsett, sachem of the Nesaquake (Nissequogue), Wyandanch of the Montauk, Wameas and Will Chippie of the Secatogues, Tobacus of the Unkechaug, Warawakmy of the Setauket, and Momewetou of the Corchaug. The relationship between the Matinnecock, who had moved to the Nissequogue during the Dutch war, and the Nissequogue is unclear. Tooker concluded that the Nissequogues, who are first mentioned in a 1650 deed to land near the Nissequogue River, were a branch of the Matinnecock (Tooker, 1911:161). William Hawk, who is descended from Native American ancestors who lived near the Nissequogue, agrees with this interpretation. Hawk believes that the Nissequogue villagers never developed into an independent "tribe." They were close "cousins" of the Matinnecock who had been pushed off their lands to the west (Hawk, 1984:34). The villagers also had a kinship connection with the Montauk. Wyandanch's grandmother was from Nissequogue, and the Montauk sachem apparently inherited land from her that he sold to John Bull Smith (Karabag and Strong, 1991:199). Some of the people from the village at Nissequogue, according to Hawk, later moved to a small settlement at Swan Creek, near Patchogue, on the south shore, where they intermarried with whites and made their living as baymen.

The first list of names for “tribes” on Long Island appears in the journal of the Reverend Charles Wooley (or “Wolley” as he spelled his name on his B.A. degree from Emanuel College, Cambridge), who served as chaplain to the administration of Governor Andros from 1678 to 1680 (Wooley, 1701, reprint, in Jaray, ed., 1968:54). The Reverend Mr. Wooley relied on an English-speaking Native American named “Nicolas” as his primary informant for about twenty-six pages of ethnographic information in his journal. Wooley refers to them as “. . . nations which may more properly be called tribes of Indians.” The spellings below are just as they appeared in his journal. Wooley lists seven “tribes” living on Long Island at the time: the Rockoway (south coast of Jamaica), Sea-qua-ta-eg (south of Huntington), Unckah-chau-ge (near Brookhaven), Se-tauck (north of Seatauket), Ocqua-baug (north of Southold), Shin-na-cock (which he described as the “greatest” tribe, near Southampton), and the Mun-tauck (eastward of East Hampton). Surprisingly, Wooley does not mention the Matinnecock, who had sold so much land to the English settlers.

The Canarsie, Massapequa, Munhausett, Merrick, Nissequogue, and Patchogue were also apparently unknown to Wooley, yet many remnant groups from these villages were living in small communities around the island at the time. Another surprising omission is the Nayack (Najack) Indian community, who lived in the area where Fort Hamilton is now located. Jasper Dankers (Danckaerts), a Labadist missionary, described his visit in 1679 to “. . . the plantation of the Najack Indians . . .” (Murphy, 1867:124). Dankers and his company were guests in a longhouse where twenty-two people lived. The structure was “. . . about sixty feet long and fourteen or fifteen feet wide. The bottom was earth, the sides were made of reed and bark of chestnut trees; the posts, or columns, were limbs of trees stuck in the ground, all fastened together” (Murphy, 1867:124). Several of the Indians spoke fluent Dutch and the community had adopted many European agricultural practices. The Nayack were certainly well known to the Dutch and English settlers on Long Island when Wooley wrote his journal. Wooley’s oversight undoubtedly reflects the casual nature of his remarks about Native American culture and serves to remind modern scholars that considerable caution is required when analyzing the early European accounts.

A map of Native American settlements sixty years later, when Azariah Horton was traveling his missionary circuit, shows three tribal settlements—Shinnecock, Montauk, and Poosapatuck—and small enclaves of Native American remnant communities scattered across Long Island from Rockaway to the east end (see Map 3). Horton described his visits to Rockaway, where he preached to a group of thirty to forty local Indians. The missionary then proceeded along the south shore of Long Island, where he preached to small groups at West Neck (near Massapequa), Secataug, and Merrick (Horton, 1744:45–47). Although it has been suggested that these remnant communities migrated to Poosapatuck and merged with the

Unkechaug. Horton's journals indicate that many groups had established themselves in small communities all across the island.

Those Native Americans who did move to Poosepatuck may have been forced to seek refuge there because they had been driven from their homes by the local town officials. The Smithtown government, for example, passed an edict in 1768 which stated ". . . that no Squaw Mustee or Mulatto female shall, after the first of May next have any house or cellar, or wigwam, standing in the bounds of said Smithtown" (STR, 283). If any did remain, the constable was ordered to pull it down and demolish it. If any well-intentioned English settlers allowed an Indian to set up a wigwam on their land, they would be fined five pounds sterling.

Silas Wood, Long Island's pioneer historian, writing in 1824, was probably not aware of Wooley's journal when he identified thirteen "tribes" in his oft-quoted roster. According to nineteenth-century historian and archivist Edmund B. O'Callaghan, there were only three copies of the journal in the United States in 1850 (Jaray, 1968:9). Wood's list, with a few minor alterations made by local historians from time to time, has, unfortunately, become the standard reference for Native Americans of Long Island and has been repeated by historians and classroom teachers to the present day. Wood located, along the north shore of Long Island, from west to east, the Matinicoc, the Nissaquague, the Setauket, and the Corchaug. On the south shore, running in the same direction, were the Canarse, the Rockaway, the Merikoke, the Marsapeague, the Secatague, the Patchogue, the Shinecoc, the Manhansett (Shelter Island), and the Montauk (Wood's spellings are used here). Wood examined the Dutch and English records carefully, but he appears to have relied primarily on the deeds for his conclusions about tribal names and boundaries. His spelling of "Manhansett," for example, appears to be taken from a 1641 deed to Shelter Island rather than from the 1644 agreement with the United Colonies in which Youghcoe is identified as the sachem of "Manhausett" (EHTR, I:96; Tooker, 1911:94).

Benjamin Thompson (1839), Nathaniel Prime (1845), Edmund B. O'Callaghan (1845), Gabriel Furman (1874), and Richard Bayles (1874), regarded by many as the first professional historians to write about Long Island, merely repeated Wood's list of thirteen "tribes" with the above-mentioned disclaimer about the term. Martha Flint (1896), one of the few who actually used the word "tribe" without apology, listed twelve "chief tribes," omitting the Secatagues without comment. She was also the first to take the "n" out of "Manhansett" and to use the spelling in the 1644 agreement between Youghcoe and the United Colonies. It is, of course, quite possible that she merely did it by accident.

Tooker ignored the 1644 reference and argued that "Manhasset" was a name that had become ". . . by some strange metamorphosis . . ." from Manhansett the name of a community formerly called Cow Bay in Queens. This strained and

arbitrary interpretation illustrates need for caution in using Tooker as a reference on Algonquian names. His interpretations are highly speculative and, in the absence of a complete Algonquian vocabulary, must be treated with considerable caution. When Tooker wrote to the Bureau of American Ethnography in Washington about his research on Algonquian names in 1887, he received a very cool response from John Wesley Powell's special assistant, James Pilling. The BAE was established in 1879 under the direction of John Wesley Powell, who wanted to set disciplined scientific standards to ethnographic research. Pilling, a meticulous researcher who had compiled a linguistic classification and bibliography file begun in 1877, was characteristically abrupt with Tooker. Powell and his staff were anxious to discourage such amateur ethnographers as Tooker from publishing works that did not meet professional standards. Tooker was told that one could reach no satisfactory results in tracing etymologies unless you have good vocabularies of the Algonkin dialects spoken on or about Long Island, and unless you also possess an extensive knowledge of Algonkin languages generally. Algonkin roots that "appear in English" and other languages are mere coincidences and are scarcely worth the trouble noting, much less of serious study. The origin and signification of Algonkin place-names is to be found by searching Algonkin languages and in no other way (Levine and Bonvillain, 1980:192).

Robert Schur, a local historian who published several articles in the *Long Island Forum*, a popular, widely read history magazine, noted that "There are, in fact no distinct tribes of Long Island, and the names frequently assigned to the Indians, such as Montauk and Shinnecock, in reality indicate only their place of settlement and not any distinct tribal cleavage" (Schur, 1942:105). Schur, however, accepted Tooker's translations without comment. Another frequent contributor to the *Forum* was John Morice, who, as we have seen, recognized the fallacy of the tribal designation. Morice also acknowledged the existence of the two linguistic groups identified later by Goddard, but his reference to these groups as "races" indicates that he was out of touch with the larger body of modern anthropological scholarship. Morice made some minor changes in Wood's list. He believed that Wood's "Patchogue" was actually a subgroup of the "Unkechaug," but he did not refer to any new documentation that would support his argument. In addition to the thirteen "tribes," Morice listed five small "remnant" groups: the Maspeths, Marechkewicks, Nayacks, Jameos, and Yennecoeks. Morice squeezed four of these into the existing list as subgroups: Maspeths-Rockaway, Marechkewicks-Merricks, Jameos-Canarsies, and Yennecoeks-Corchaug. The Nayacks, who lived near Fort Hamilton just south of the Maspeths, were said to have left the island shortly after the Dutch settlers arrived.

Paul Bailey (1959) and Jacqueline Overton (1963), two of the most widely used sources on Long Island Native Americans, repeated the conventional list and Tooker's translations. Bailey, as we have seen, acknowledged that the term "tribe"

was inappropriate; nevertheless he went on in the next paragraph to say, "The 13 tribes living here at the beginning of the white era were as follows: . . ." and he repeated Wood's list with Tooker's translations (Bailey, 1959:7). Overton appears to have used Martha Flint's list because she also spelled the Shelter Island "tribal" name "Manhassett."

George Weeks (1965) broke with Wood's model and described seventeen "principal communities," adding the "Maskutchoung," a village community near Hempstead and listing the "Maerckaawicks" (Weeks' spelling) as a separate community from the Merricks. The disagreement between Morice and Wood over the Patchogues and Unkechaug was resolved here by including both and adding the Poosepatuck, a small group east of the Patchogue. If we add the Yennecock, the Nayacks, the Jameos, and the Maspeths, we now have a total of twenty-one groups. More could easily be added by a thorough search through the local town archives. Weeks' publication complicated the tidy picture of the thirteen "tribes" and, perhaps for that reason, has seldom been mentioned in the popular literature.

In fairness to the local authors cited above, it should be noted that most of them were not attempting to write a comprehensive survey of Native American history on Long Island. Their primary goal was to celebrate the colonial achievement of their European ancestors. The simplistic account of the thirteen tribes was a convenient vehicle to embroider their story with a cardboard presence that would not distract the reader. The Native American descendants today are burdened by these shallow images of their ancestors. The more serious issue here is not the artificial creation of "tribes" that never existed; it is the assertion that there are no "real tribes" *or* "Indians" left on Long Island.

The Myth of Extinction

In order to discuss this popular myth we must attempt to define "race," a term even more controversial than "tribe." "Race" and "tribe" pose some similar problems for scholars. Many anthropologists and geneticists have concluded that the term "race," like "tribe," is so often imbued with negative stereotypes and racist perceptions that it should be abandoned by scholars (Aceves and King, 1979:152–57). Most agree that identifiable physical types or "phenotypes" are found in certain population groups but that the more important reality is a constant fluidity of genes throughout all human societies. Miscegenation began on Long Island even before the Dutch settlements were established here. The sachem from Rockaway reminded his Dutch visitor in 1643 that his people had given the Dutch traders ". . . their daughters to sleep with, by whom they had begotton children and there roved many an Indian who was begotton by a Swanneken [Dutchman] . . ." (Jameson, 1909:231). The manuscript records for the parish hall

meetings in colonial Hempstead include many references to petitions from Native American women who claimed that the English fathers of their children had abandoned them (Marshall, 1962:50). The exploitive relationship between European men and Native American women was seldom mentioned by local historians, who tended to focus on Native American relations with people of African descent.

The “disappearance” of the Indian “race” on Long Island is a recurring theme in local history books. Daniel Denton, the son of the Hempstead minister, wrote in 1670 that the Indians had “. . . decrease by the Hand of God. . . . a Divine Hand makes way for them [the English] by removing or cutting off the Indians either by wars one with the other, or by some raging mortal disease” (Jaray, 1968:7). Denton set the tone for the extinction myth by asserting that the native people were nearly gone and that it was God’s will, rather than any action by the whites, that was responsible. Warfare between Native American groups was characterized by sporadic raiding, which seldom took many lives, whereas the wars waged against them by the English and the Dutch were brutal and devastating. The epidemics of smallpox, cholera, and measles were introduced by the Europeans, not a “Divine Hand.” In spite of these injuries inflicted by the white settlers, the Native Americans did not dwindle, as Denton claimed.

Native Americans were still around in 1874 when Gabriel Furman announced their virtual extinction in his *Antiquities of Long Island*. He pressed the same theme introduced by Denton, announcing that nature itself, in the form of disease, was wiping out the Indians to make way for the more dynamic white race. Furman added a new twist, which appealed to intellectuals in the latter half of the nineteenth century following the publication of Darwin’s work on evolution. He argued that there had never been any significant miscegenation between whites and Indians because mixed blood “. . . scarcely ever lasts beyond the second generation . . . but gradually wastes away . . .” (Furman, 1874:52). Furman’s conclusions about mixtures of “white” and “African” blood are not recorded, but the obvious implication is that they did all too well and resulted in the extinction of “Indianness” in the descendants. Culture and “blood” were blended into one concept by nineteenth-century writers in spite of the fact that blood has nothing to do with either physical appearance or culture.

Local newspapers always announced the death of an elderly Indian as the passing of the “last pureblood.” When Mary Walkus died at the age of 100 in 1867, a town official solemnly noted that she was “. . . the last full-blooded squaw and oldest of the Shinnecoaks.” This biological inaccuracy, with its false ring of finality, implied that the “real Indians” had died out. When Wickham Cuffee died in 1915 he was anointed “last of the Shinnecoaks” by historian John Morice. In 1936, when Mary Rebecca Kellis died at the age of 102, she was duly heralded as

“. . . the last full-blooded Indian living on Long Island” (*Long Island Press*, April 22, 1936). And so it goes.

The popular fourth-grade text by Sesso and White, published last year, has a photograph of Stephen Pharaoh under the conventional map of the thirteen tribes. The caption reads, “Stephen Pharaoh, the last full-blooded Montauk, lived until 1879” (Sesso and White, 1991:21). The authors perpetuate both of the myths on the same page. George Mannello’s seventh-grade text leaves a similar impression. Near the end of his chapter on the Long Island Indians, a section is subtitled “The Disappearance of the Indians” (Mannello, 1984:22). Three years before he wrote *The Thirteen Tribes of Long Island* (1959), Paul Bailey published an article in the *Long Island Forum* (1956) entitled “Decline and Fall of Tribal Life.” In the article he ignores the development of tribal systems at Poospatuck and Shinnecock because he accepts the nineteenth-century concept of an absolute relationship between genetic phenotype and social behavior. Bailey assumes that miscegenation and tribal systems are incompatible. This article was reprinted in the 1982 edition of *The Thirteen Tribes of Long Island* under the title “The Indian’s Decline.” Ironically, many of the people of African descent who were marrying into the local Native American communities during the seventeenth century had been born and raised in tribal systems in Africa. It is certainly possible that this mixture actually enriched and strengthened tribal systems and traditional belief systems.

The question of Native American identity has been addressed in a number of ways over the years. In the late nineteenth century racial characteristics were used to define population boundaries. This attempt raised more questions than it answered because there was little consensus among scholars about the meaning of the term “race.” Lewis Morgan, one of the founders of modern anthropology, believed that blood carried the program for physical appearance and social behavior. His view that each race had a distinct blood type soon became fixed in the popular understanding of “race” and continues to influence perceptions of human differences. The federal government began, at that time, to use blood quantum as a criterion to determine access to public funds by Native American groups and continues that policy on many western reservations today. The federal agents on the reservations set up tribal rolls by going to each household, looking at the people, and listing them by “blood quantum.” The designation was often quite arbitrary and was left to the agent and the Indian family to settle. Once on the roll as “full-blooded,” subsequent marriages by the children and their descendants would be monitored and recorded in the tribal books. Varying standards for membership in the tribe were established on different reservations and were often changed by administrative or legislative acts. The federal government, in 1986, proposed to fix a blood quantum of one quarter for medical service at Indian Health Service clinics, yet tribal governments have set limits for membership that range from one half to one sixteenth (Snipp, 1991:34). “American Indians,”

commented C. Mathew Snipp in his analysis of the 1980 census for Native Americans, “. . . are the only group in American society for whom bloodlines have the same importance as they do for show animals and race horses” (Snipp, 1991:34). Snipp noted that blood quantum was an archaic concept that provides no sound rationale for determining when an individual is no longer an Indian.

Morgan’s view of “blood quantum” has been completely rejected by modern scientists. Biologists, on the basis of such physical indicators as blood type, pigmentation, hair texture, nasal index, and ear wax, have classified human groups into four “major” groups—Australoid, Negroid, Mongoloid, and Caucasoid—and some twenty-six subgroups (Montague, 1960; Goldsby, 1971). This rather cumbersome classification system has proven virtually impossible to apply to groups in the real world. The Native Americans have been identified as a subgroup of the Mongoloid race, but there are nearly as many distinct physical differences within this category as there are differences distinguishing them from other “Mongoloids.” Geneticists agree that pure Native American genotypes, if indeed they ever existed, disappeared very soon after conquest (Goldsby, 1971; Driver, 1969:5–6; Snipp, 1991). These racial classifications are at best general groupings that have very limited usefulness in dealing with real human beings.

The problem is compounded when social and mental attributes are arbitrarily fused onto the biological criteria. Native Americans, for example, have been idealized in the minds of many non-Indians into two compelling cardboard images: the “noble savage” and the “brutal savage” (Berkhofer, Jr., 1978; Huddleston, 1967). There is also a historical dimension to the stereotyped image. The idealized “true Indian” is dressed in buckskin and feathers, on horseback or in the woods staring stoically at the horizon. The “Indianness” of Native Americans dressed in contemporary clothes and driving cars is questioned. This view, frozen in time, assumes that social change and cultural adaptation discredit “authentic Indianness.” The more important assumption here is that the dominant white group has the right to certify the cultural identity of non-whites. During the centuries of conflict on the frontier it was often said that the only good Indian was a dead one. Today, particularly in the east, many whites apparently believe that the only “true Indian” is a dead one. The press, for example, never acknowledges the “full bloodedness” of Indians until they die.

The obvious problems with “blood quantum” and genetic “ideal types” have led Congress to define an “Indian” as anyone who identifies as an Indian and is accepted by an Indian community as a member. Although many federal agencies in the western states continue to limit access to services to quarter-“bloods,” and many Indian reservations still use the blood quantum criterion because it is an arbitrary solution to controversies over membership, the general tendency now is to move toward a more objective, value-free classification system based on self-

identification and ethnicity (Snipp, 1991:59–61). This enlightened approach has a considerable impact on the “myth of extinction” on Long Island. An ethnic group is defined as a human population group that shares a significant number of the following shared attributes: geographic location, race, language, religion, kinship, traditions, values, symbols, folklore, unique political institutions, a sense of distinctiveness, and defined criteria for membership that are enforced by the group itself. “Ethnicity” is, therefore, a broad category that includes race as one factor among many others. Native Americans are an ethnic group that includes a variety of diverse cultural communities. Few of these communities share all of the attributes on the list, and there will always be controversy over where the line is drawn that determines a legitimate membership in the larger group. The most recent federal administrative ruling on the definition of tribal status follows this model. Groups who apply for recognition as Indian tribes are rated on a point system. Points are given on a weighted basis for such cultural survivals as language, religion, community participation in seasonal ceremonies, internal social and political structure, membership requirements, and indications of a shared sense of belonging to a distinct community.

There are three major subcategories in the 1980 census that identified themselves with a Native American heritage (Snipp, 1991:50–53). The first includes persons who identified themselves as Native American by race and culture. They were classified as “Native American.” The second included those who identified themselves as Native Americans of multiple ancestry, and the third consisted of those who identified themselves as whites or African-Americans with some Indian ancestry. The census indicated that there were 947,500 people in the first category, 269,700 in the second, and over 5,000,000 in the third. If, as the geneticists conclude, the original gene pool was altered centuries ago, the first two groups really belong together. That is what Snipp did for his study. He eliminated the third group, whose primary identity was non-Indian, and compiled his data from the first two.

Although the myth of Native American extinction on Long Island, which focused on the outdated and misleading concept of “pure blood,” has been rejected by contemporary scholars, it is still a widely held perspective among local non-Indians (Stone, 1989:167). Deeply rooted racial prejudices are virtually impossible to dispel with scholarly argument, but ignorance and misinformation can be addressed. Let us first examine the case for the Shinnecock and Poosapatuck today. These communities each have their own common geographic land base on state-recognized reservations. They have an extended family kinship system that unites clan groups (Hayes, 1983:336–43; Cuffee and Stone, 1983:311–29). At Shinnecock there are eight clans, each including an average of forty members, and several smaller family groupings (Hayes, 1983:338). The Shinnecock join together for seasonal celebrations, which intensify a sense of community and mark them as

distinct from their non-Indian neighbors (Laudin, 1983:345–66; Strong, 1983:44–45). Both reservations have well-established procedures for electing their leaders and determining tribal membership (Strong and Holmberg, 1983:226-30; Papageorge, 1983:141-225).

Many of the prehistoric customs have survived in Shinnecock culture to the present day. Anthropologist Rose Oldfield Hayes, who did her Ph.D. dissertation on the Shinnecock, noted that there were “. . . highly critical and effective remnants . . .” of prehistoric culture that remained in practice. The contemporary Shinnecock still are “. . . oriented to marine activities and still reject authority although they are responsive to tribal pressures. They have selectively adopted, adapted, and organized enduring cultural themes of the ancient Shinnecock; the pervasive American high technology and its organization washes against these themes with little effect” (Hayes, 1983a:334). The Shinnecock Oyster Hatchery, a modern solar-heated plant operated by the tribe, is the present-day expression of a maritime tradition that connects the contemporary Shinnecock with the prehistoric fishermen and whalers (Shinnecock Trustees, 1983:400–404).

Many traditions, of course, have disappeared or have been significantly altered, but this is also the case among nearly every Native American community in North America. All of the Long Island Native Americans, along with more than 90 percent of the Indians of multiple ancestry, have lost their original language. Even among those classified as Indians of traditional ancestry, only 31 percent still speak their own language (Snipp, 1991:56). The ancient religions have also been lost, but many sacred rituals and ceremonies have been incorporated into Christian observances. This tradition of adaptive incorporations began in the eighteenth century when the Reverend Paul Cuffee, a Shinnecock minister, adapted the traditional June “Green Corn Harvest” to include a Christian service (Strong, 1987:4). This tradition of incorporation continues today. Funerals and weddings often include the drum, chants, processions, and a community meal.

The Matinnecock and Montauk descendants are scattered across Long Island, but they maintain loose community networks that have enabled them to survive against considerable odds. Many of the Montauk left the island to join an expatriate community in Wisconsin, where they live today. The Montauk are presently undergoing a tribal revival led by a small group of dedicated Montauk descendants. The process of registration on a tribal roll has begun, and there is talk of another attempt to reclaim the ancestral lands at Montauk. The Matinnecock longhouse organizations in Nassau and western Suffolk counties continue to carry on many of the traditional ceremonies, which revitalize their sense of community. It is, of course, a very difficult struggle to maintain cultural integrity in the absence of a land base. The Matinnecock and Montauk are not unique in this regard, because a growing number of Native American people have left their reservations

to live in cultural exile among non-Indians. N. Scott Momaday, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *House Made of Dawn*, commented on his experience of living away from the reservation where he was born: "I went away from the Indian world and entered a different context. But I continue to think of myself as Indian. . . . I think that is what most Indian people are doing today. They go off the reservation, but they keep an idea of themselves as Indians. That's the trick." (*New York Times*, 19 February 1992:C20).

Conclusion

The myth of the thirteen tribes actually incorporates two related myths: the tribal myth and the myth of extinction. The first reduces Native American culture and history to a shallow cardboard backdrop for the drama of European "discovery," "settlement," and "progress," and the second conveniently discredits the identity of the Native American descendants and assuages any feelings of guilt or remorse. These myths continue to be perpetuated in the popular media and in the classrooms, often by people who are genuinely sympathetic to the contemporary Native American peoples on Long Island.

A large part of the problem is the understandable tendency to rely on secondary sources for information about the Native American experience on Long Island. The primary documents make it quite clear that there were no tribal systems on Long Island prior to the sporadic series of raids known as Governor Kieft's War (1640–45), which resulted in the deaths of more than one thousand Native Americans and a few dozen whites. After 1650, tribal systems emerged among the Montauk and the Shinnecock, and perhaps among the Matinneck. In 1700 the Poosepatuck reservation was established and a tribal system soon developed, as many remnant groups from the western Long Island villages moved there. These social adaptations, imposed to manipulate and control, were later turned into mechanisms for group survival by the Native Americans themselves.

The four communities did not die out, as alleged in the white folk traditions. There was considerable miscegenation with Caucasoids and African-Americans, but there is no relationship between genetic phenotypes and cultural attitudes. The basic sense of belonging to a distinct Native American community remains strong, particularly among the Shinnecock and Poosepatuck, where a land base has been preserved. The Matinneck and the Montauk have had a much more difficult time of preserving their identity. Their struggle has been burdened by the need to defend themselves against the continual reinforcement of the myths about their past and their premature obituaries in the media.

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